

## Chapter 5

# **Lakes, Myths and Legends: The Relationship Between Tourism and Cultural Values for Water in Aotearoa/New Zealand**

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Indigenous people are often characterised as being inseparable from the landscapes they inhabit through the use of resources or symbolic and historical associations with natural environments. The physical presence of indigenous people is obvious to visitors – for example, traditional homes, monuments, archaeological sites or villages. The intangible aspects of culturally significant landscape features are often elusive, but visitors may become aware of them through promotional material; the designation of indigenous place names; and through interpretation which usually provides information of local history, the use of natural resources and local myths or legends (Upitis 1989; Keelan 1996; Hinch 1998; Avery 1999; Brown 1999; Kearsley *et al.* 1999; Pfister 2000; Shackley 2001). This chapter introduces the importance of the natural environment to the indigenous people of Aotearoa/New Zealand, the Maori, and gives examples to illustrate how visitors may be informed of the cultural values for lakes in New Zealand.

## **Maori and Lakes**

The New Zealand Maori have a close relationship with the natural environment. New Zealand has extensive natural areas offering a wide range of recreational opportunities for visitors. Many of the natural areas have significant cultural values to *tangata whenua* (original inhabitants of the land, indigenous peoples, Maori) and *pakeha* (non-Maori, European) that can be harmed through the inappropriate activities of tourists (O'Regan 1990; Keelan 1996). Mountains, lakes, rivers, coastal and forest areas contain resources and features that are considered to be *taonga* (treasured) by Maori (Walker 1992; Sinclair 1992a, 1992b). Specific landscape features

and natural resources, including those associated with water, are traditionally viewed as having a *mauri* or life force. Traditional villages were often sited near lakes which were an important source of *mahinga kai* (food, also places where food is stored, such a freshwater fish and eel). *Tapu* (sacred) sites, including *urupa* (burial grounds), were often located on the shores or islands of rivers and lakes. Lakes have also been associated with traditional myths, tribal legends and could be the dwelling places of supernatural beings such as *taniwha* (monster, powerful person).

### Managing the Cultural Landscape

The Conservation Act (1987) and Resource Management Act (1991) guide the Crown agencies and government departments, such as the Ministry for the Environment and Department of Conservation (DOC), regional or district councils in the management of New Zealand's natural and urban environments. The acts purport to conserve the natural resources of New Zealand by controlling the scale and type of industry, and other activities – for example, tourism or recreation – which may occur in various environments, including lakes. Both Acts reflect the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, the founding constitutional document of New Zealand. Article Two of the Treaty of Waitangi intended to guarantee Maori their exclusive rights and interests to collective land, resources and *taonga* (things of value, treasured) (Sinclair 1992a, 1992b). From the mid-1970s an intense revival of pride in Maori culture resulted in increased Maori pressure for government recognition of Maori traditions, including the *kaitiaki* (traditional guardianship) of natural resources (Walker, 1992). In 1975 the Waitangi Tribunal was established to settle Maori land and resource claims surrounding Treaty grievances. The past two decades has seen an increased awareness of treaty obligations by the New Zealand government with consequent legislation reflecting the 'spirit' of the Treaty of Waitangi. Treaty settlements increasingly recognise that local *iwi* have *kaitakitanga* of natural resources, lakes, rivers, ancestral sites and other *taonga*.

Cooperative conservation management encouraging consultation with *iwi* (tribal groups) and acknowledgement of *kaitakitanga* (traditional guardianship) are important principles of natural resource management in New Zealand. One aspect of Treaty settlements that affects lakes usage has been the designation of *nohoanga* or *ukaipo* (camp sites) on Crown land that enable Maori belonging to specific *iwi* to enjoy the traditional practices of gathering food and natural resources. *Nohoanga* are usually up to one hectare in size and are often located by lakes – for instance, Mavora Lakes in Central Southland; Lake Kaniere in Westland; Lake Pukaki in South Canterbury and Lake Waikaremoana in the North Island.

Previous studies have noted that Maori are poorly represented as participants in outdoor recreation in natural areas (Lomax 1988; Matunga 1995a, 1995b; Devlin and Booth 1998). Maori outdoor recreation was viewed as a means of

linking people and place, or *tangata whenua* with their *turangawaewae* (standing place from where one gains the authority to belong), exploring the natural environments and cultural traditions of their *tupuna* [ancestors; grandparent (pl: tipuna)], reinforcing basic values of Maori culture and instilling a sense of cultural pride. (Matunga 1995a: 18)

The availability of such sites for traditional purposes is a positive initiative as the sites encourage Maori *iwi* members to participate in recreation activities such as fishing, boating and camping in national park and outdoors settings.

Despite the positive social and cultural benefits of *nohoanga*, there has been public opposition. The designation of *nohoanga* has been perceived as racist when the land-use has been exclusively for Maori (*Otago Daily Times* 1998; *Southland Times* 2000). The public can usually camp at nearby sites, public access is maintained to adjacent rivers and lakes and there are time limits as to when the camping areas are set aside as *nohoanga* for exclusive use by *iwi* members. The *nohoanga* are often administered by *rananga* or tribal councils, occasionally utilising European management techniques – for example booking systems to manage usage of such sites. The *rananga* also inform the general public of the *nohoanga* site designation through advertisements within daily newspapers.

### Tourism and cultural values

The economic and recreational significance of New Zealand's natural landscape has been instrumental in the development of what is now New Zealand's primary generator of international monetary exchange, with 2.3 million international visitors spending NZ\$7.4 billion in the year ending October 2004 (Tourism New Zealand 2004). The tourism industry has a history of promotional imagery, placing Maori alongside the picturesque landscape to add an 'exotic cultural flavour' to potential visitor experiences (Ateljevic & Doorne 2002). Indeed, 'Maori carvings and/or Maori maidens dressed in traditional costume were integrated as essential elements of the "scenic splendour"' (Ateljevic & Doorne 2002: 655). Integrating visual elements of the culture within tourism promotion has continued with textual allusion such as references to Maori mythology and legends within scenic landscapes.

Maori tourism has been defined as 'tourism products that utilise cultural, historical, heritage or natural resources that are uniquely Maori

with substantial Maori ownership and control of the business' (Ingram 1997: n.p). Maori tourism operations have traditionally provided cultural performances within hotel or *marae* (community buildings and surrounding area associated with *iwi*) settings, with increasing diversification of the Maori tourism product to include nature-based tourism attractions such as ecotourism in natural areas with cultural significance (Aotearoa Maori Tourism Federation 1994). Increasingly, there are a number of Maori and non-Maori tourism operators and organisations that present the cultural heritage of Maori to visitors, adding a unique cultural dimension to visitor experiences of New Zealand lake environments. Additionally, Maori-owned tourism operations in lake environments can be of economic and social benefit to local *iwi*, connecting owner/operators and staff to their traditional landscapes.

Tourism activities and attractions are often based around lakes that have cultural significance to Maori and attempts have been made to acknowledge the cultural values at a number of lake destinations. Visitors and tourism operations may impact upon Maori values in both positive and negative ways. Economic and social benefits could result if local Maori were involved with the management of commercial visitors operations to significant sites associated with traditional myths, *mahinga kai*, legends or history. However, visitation to sensitive areas, including archaeological sites, *pa* (occupation site or fortified village), battle sites and *waahi tapu* (sacred places), could not only result in negative impacts, but a weakening of the *mana* (power, prestige, authority) associated with such sites. Similarly, local *iwi* who are not involved with resource management are potentially faced with neither having the opportunity to contribute to sustainable tourism development, nor experiencing the financial benefits of any visitation.

## Interpreting Lakes

With the Resource Management Act (1991), government agencies are required to consult with local *iwi* regarding the management of culturally significant areas (Department of Conservation 2001). Consultation relevant to lakes tourism has concentrated on public access to and use of, lakes and resources at popular visitor destinations. *Iwi* members may also be consulted about the preparation of visitor information and interpretation that can inform the general public of the cultural values of the area. Cultural interpretation is increasing at a number of significant sites (including lakes) in New Zealand for the specific purpose of educating the public and raising visitor awareness of cultural values in each area (Keelan 1996; MacLennan 2000; Department of Conservation (DOC) 2002b). The cultural values of lakes can be communicated in

non-commercial ways – for example, with interpretation panels at picnic and camping areas, road ends, car parks and boat launch ramps. Without such interpretation visitors may be unaware of the significant community and Maori values for the environment, resulting in inappropriate visitor behaviour that causes negative impacts and may harm the *mana* of the area, offending local community members.

Interpretation of tourism activities provided by local *iwi* offering cultural perspectives of the natural world could appeal to a number of visitors seeking a nature-based experience that is both environmentally and culturally sustainable. Occasionally, non-Maori operators seek to offer cultural interpretation within experiences that may have little outward relationship to the culture. For example, the managers of Kawerau Jet in Queenstown have displayed panels narrating the Ngai Tahu legends for Lake Wakatipu on the walls of the business premises.

Mythology complements a range of tourist activities, adding a Maori dimension to the product. Increasingly, companies offering mythology as part of the tourism product are owned by local *iwi* that they have direct control over the final product. The presentation of cultural mythology that is meaningful to *tangata whenua* can be important for strengthening their cultural identity. The retelling of a myth to tourists provides Maori with an opportunity to inform the visitor of their historic ties with culturally significant locations. For contemporary Maori, mythology relates the deeds of their ancestors and explains the traditional view of the formation of the natural world. The association of a myth with a geographical location identifies the spiritual or ancestral significance of a place to the Maori people (Walker 1992). The retelling of a myth provides Maori with an opportunity to convey their *turan-gawaewae* (attachment to land, sense of place) by informing visitors of their historic, ancestral and spiritual ties with culturally significant areas. Ideally, any commercial use of such information would be managed through the selection of approved material that is communicated with the consent of the traditional owners (Walker 1992, 1996; Keelan 1996; Kearsley *et al.* 1999; Pfister 2000; Staiff *et al.* 2002).

Most lakes destinations in New Zealand provide few insights into cultural values. This could be for a number of reasons. Perhaps local *iwi* do not want to have their values displayed to the visiting public; local marketing and interpretation material may be in a development phase requiring lengthy consultation procedures with *iwi*; there may be a perceived lack of public interest in the material; or such information could have a secondary role – providing the ‘exotic’ touch to visitor experiences. The following case studies of lake destinations have been selected to illustrate further the *iwi* relationships with lakes and the scale of cultural interpretation that may occur.



## Lake Taupo and the Rotorua Lakes

New Zealand's largest lake, Lake Taupo, is located in the central North Island. The tourist town of Rotorua is one-and-a-half hours' driving time to the north and Tongariro National Park lies to the south of the lake. Lake Taupo has been regaled as the hub of tourism in the North Island, attracting 1.4 million visitor nights per annum, 24% of which are international visitors (Department of Conservation 2002a: 34). As a visitor destination, the lake is world renowned for trout fishing and is popular for swimming, boating, water-skiing, canoeing or kayaking and wind surfing, as well as non-water dependent recreation such as multi-sport, skiing, tramping, climbing and hunting. The township of Taupo has enjoyed strong economic growth as a domestic and international visitor destination because of the lake's resources.

For the Ngati Tuwharetoa *iwi*, the main tribe in the area, the cultural values for the central North Island are indivisible from the landscape. The sacred mountains of Tongariro National Park are one of the few World Heritage areas to have achieved the status based on natural and cultural criteria. Maori-operated tourism activities in the area include guided walks of Whirinaki and Pureora Forest Park, the newly created Wairakei Terraces and geothermal area, and several cultural performance venues. Several operators seek to provide visitors with cultural experiences on Lake Taupo. 'Te Moana Charters' is a Maori-owned and operated guided trout-fishing operation on the lake. Non-Maori-owned companies that incorporate Maori culture within their tours include 'Kayaking Kiwi', the Ernest Kemp Replica Steamboat and the Barbary sailing yacht which visit contemporary Maori rock carvings located on lakeside cliffs. These operations include Maori cultural information through retelling the legend of early Maori discovery by the chief, *tohunga* Ngatoroirangi, of the lake.

In 1992, the Maori Land Court returned legal ownership of the waters, lake bed and river tributaries of Lake Taupo to Ngati Tuwharetoa so that the tribal *mana* could be preserved and enhanced. There was a proviso that the general public would continue to have freedom of entry and access to the waters. However, the lake is managed in a partnership between Crown agencies and the *iwi* under Section 17 of the Reserves Act (1977). The Ngati Tuwharetoa Environmental Iwi Management Plan states that 'As Kaitiaki nga hapu o Ngati Tuwharetoa have an intrinsic duty to ensure that the *mauri* and therefore the physical and spiritual health of the environment is maintained, protected and enhanced' (Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board 2001). Management issues and concerns relevant to tourism activities that were identified by Ngati Tuwharetoa included protection of *waahi tapu*; discharge of human sewage; pollution; destruction of lake habitats affecting indigenous flora and fauna;

and 'the protection of customary and traditional fishing rights and practices' (Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board 2001).

Such issues affect other *iwi* and *hapu* (subtribe, family group) throughout the country and most recently the Te Arawa people of the Rotorua region became co-managers, with the Crown, of the Rotorua lakes. Since 1922, the Te Arawa had been paid an annuity, had ancestral fishing rights and control of Lake Rotorua's *urupa*, but limited input with management of the lakes by the Crown agencies. The annuity amounted to NZ \$18,000 since 1977 but, according to Joe Malcolm, a *kaumatua* (elder) of the *iwi*, the Rotorua lakes generated '\$40 million a year from wharf feed, fishing licences and so on. That money could be used to care for and manage the lakes' (Ilolahia 2001: 62). The *iwi* have only been consulted regularly about the management of the Rotorua fisheries or tourism activities on the lake since the Rotorua District Council, Environment Bay of Plenty and Te Arawa Maori Trust Board began working collaboratively to manage the lakes in the 1990s.

Visitors to Lake Rotorua have been enticed to experience the area with promotional material that alluded to the legend of the romance between a Maori maiden, Hinemoa and warrior, Tutanekai. Hinemoa dwelt on the shores of Lake Rotorua and was forbidden by her family to meet with Tutanekai. She swam the cold waters of the lake at night to avoid being detected and was united with her lover. Over the past century this popular legend has been related to many tourists who can travel to Hinemoa's bathing site on Mokoia Island. Operators invite tourists to 'trace the legend of Hinemoa and Tutanekai (a forbidden love story) and then wade through the hot pools that Hinemoa rested in after her long swim from Owhat to Mokoia Island' (Rotorua Lakes Cruises Ltd, 2004). Promotional material continues to refer to the legend, in one instance offering tourists the opportunity to 'learn the legend' and by attending a *hangi* (traditional feast cooked in an earth oven) and concert party they too may 'fall under the spell of Tutanekai's flute' (Novotel Royal Lakeside Rotorua 2003).

### Fiordland National Park and Lake Te Anau

The township of Te Anau is located on the shores of Lake Te Anau at the eastern boundary of Fiordland National Park. The lake is the second largest in New Zealand, Lake Taupo being the largest. Fiordland National Park was established in 1952 and has the distinction of being part of the South West New Zealand (Te Wahipounamu) World Heritage Area. The 2001 census identified a population of 1857 people and 230 businesses in the township (Statistics NZ 2003). From Te Anau, trampers can access a number of Great Walks within the national park including the Milford, Routeburn and Kepler Tracks. The township is

also a major destination for visitors en-route to Milford Sound, visitor statistics estimating approximately 133,507 visits to the Te Anau Visitor Centre in 2002 (DOC 2002b: 66).

Guidebooks and Internet websites inform visitors of the cultural values of the lakes in the area – for example:

Tapara is the original Maori name for nearby Lake Gunn and refers to a Ngai Tahu ancestor Tapara. The lake was a stopover for parties heading to Anita Bay in search of greenstone. (Lonely Planet 2002: 728)

An Internet site relates the legend of Lake Te Anau:

Legend has it that the lake was called 'the lake of infidelity' after the wife of the head warrior betrayed her husband by showing a neighbouring tribal warrior where the sacred well of life was and when the neighbouring tribesman drank from the well it over flowed flooding and drowning the tribe and forming what is now Lake Te Anau. (Independent Traveller's Adventure Guide 2003)

Within the Te Anau Visitor Centre, several displays refer to Ngai Tahu values. Ta Te Raki Whanoa, an ancestral figure, is the focus of one wall panel and a diorama display presents early Maori lifestyle within a cave setting. Panels within the diorama relate the importance of Fiordland to Ngai Tahu as the local *tangata whenua* and the significance of the mountain, Aoraki/Mount Cook. Other panels in the cave diorama discuss traditional clothing, food sources and domestic matters such as shelters, fire lighting and sleeping areas.

Since the late 1990s, the Department of Conservation Te Anau summer holiday programme has incorporated a Ngai Tahu perspective on the area. Between five and seven of the Te Anau summer holiday programme activities (walks and talks) incorporate 'conservation from a Maori perspective', including 'Moods of Manapouri' which is a boat cruise on nearby Lake Manapouri, guided by a Ngai Tahu interpreter. On this excursion visitors can 'Hear how the early Maori journeyed through this landscape and view some of their old resting and food gathering spots around the lakeshore' (DOC 2000).

Real Journeys, formerly Fiordland Travel, offers boat tours on Lake Te Anau. While it is the natural heritage of the area (fiords, lakes and mountains), rather than cultural features that are marketed to visitors to the region, the company incorporates local Maori (Ngai Tahu) perspectives within its tours as a result of staff participation in cultural workshops provided by Ngai Tahu. The tour to Te Anau caves is a half-day excursion commencing with a boat trip across Lake Te Anau and the boat skipper's commentary includes information about the Manapouri hydro-electricity scheme, captive rearing of *takahe* (an endangered bird) by the Department



of Conservation (DOC) and early Maori or European history of the area. The skipper usually mentions the Waitaha and Ngai Tahu people on seasonal food-gathering expeditions. The commentary may incorporate the use of *mokihi* (rafts) by the Maori, which were used to cross the lake on the trip to Milford Sound in search of *takiwai o pounamu*, a type of greenstone or precious jade. These *mokihi* were also used on Lake Manapouri. At Te Anau caves there are display panels in the visitor centre relating cultural aspects of the area prior to the guided cave trip. One of the exterior panels situated by the lake and entitled 'Swirling Waters' mentions the Maori name of the Te Anau Caves. The name was originally Te Ana-au and meant 'the cave with a current of water swirling in and out', possibly forming a whirlpool. Another panel 'Mirrored in the Pool' has distinctive *kowhaiwhai* (traditional decorative artwork) pattern borders and tells a traditional legend of the area. Promotional information, presented in the 'Te Anau Glow-worm Caves' brochure produced by Real Journeys, includes a page devoted to Maori tradition entitled 'Lost in Legend', raising visitor awareness of the cultural values for the area.

Fiordland National Park tourism operations, *iwi* and national park management mindfully work towards providing visitors with opportunities to learn about the cultural values for the area. *Mahinga kai*, pre-European Maori history and stories linking the ancestors of early Fiordland Maori to the surrounding lake and alpine environments are dominant themes related to visitors through commercial and non-commercial activities.

## Lake Pukaki

Lake Pukaki is located in the Mackenzie Country of South Island. The lake is world renowned for its turquoise colour and the spectacular view of the Southern Alps. Lake Pukaki and its surroundings were considerably altered in 1979 when, on completion of a major hydro-electricity scheme in the Mackenzie Country, the lake volume increased considerably upon back-filling of a dam. In terms of recreational values, the lake's glacial characteristics reduced water clarity (but this contributes to the renowned turquoise colouring) and the icy temperatures have limited its use for activities such as boating, swimming or kayaking. Recreational activity has been concentrated during the summer season at other lakes in the Mackenzie Country – for example, Lake Tekapo (water-skiing and boating), Ohau (boating and fishing), Alexandrina (fishing, boating) and Ruataniwha (boating, water-skiing, jet-skiing, rowing, swimming), as have the hydro-electricity lakes of the Waitaki Valley, including Benmore.

Lake Pukaki is one of many lakes and rivers of significant value to *tangata whenua* in the region. The land around Lake Pukaki has yielded remnants of archaeological evidence of seasonal visits by pre-European Maori. Numerous rock-art sites and *waahi tapu* areas were submerged

with the rising lake level on completion of the hydro-electricity project, thus leaving few tangible remains of early Maori culture in the area for the contemporary visitor. The Ngai Tahu and Waitaha peoples have a rich oral history that records visits by those who sought *mahika kai* (Tau *et al.* 1990). The original lake area, prior to hydro-electricity development, was the site for camping settlements and had important habitat where *mahika kai*, particularly waterfowl and freshwater eels were gathered. The lake is filled by melt-waters originating from a sacred source for *tangata whenua* – Aoraki/Mount Cook, the *tupuna* (ancestor) of Ngai Tahu and the Waitaha peoples (Tau *et al.* 1990). For both the Waitaha and Ngai Tahu people the waters of Aoraki/Mount Cook were sacred and are still used for ceremonial purposes (Tau *et al.* 1990). The melt-waters from Aoraki/Mount Cook enter the lake via the Tasman and Hooker glaciers and their tributaries, the Hooker and Tasman rivers. The cultural values for the lake are typical of a widespread respect the Maori have for the *mauri*, or life-force of water, within lakes and rivers.

With the Ngai Tahu Treaty Settlement Act (1998) a *nohoanga* was mapped for members of Ngai Tahu on the eastern shores of Lake Pukaki so that members of the *iwi* could make annual trips to the area and camp. While affording superb views of Aoraki/Mount Cook, the site is also exposed to strong prevailing north-west and southerly winds, thus making it at times a challenging and inhospitable area in which to camp. This is but one of several *nohoanga* located beside lakes and rivers in the Mackenzie Country. The *nohoanga* have been controversial at times as there is a policy of no public camping, much to the ire of locals and visitors to the area. In 1998, members of the Otago Conservation Board objected to the designation of *nohoanga* in the Otago region, viewing such designation as potentially causing conflict between traditional *pakeha* recreational users and Maori customary users (Otago Daily Times 1998). The *nohoanga* is located within a larger camping area still available for general public use. The Ngai Tahu Maori Community Law Centre responded that personal opinions of board members had failed to recognise the need for *nohoanga* so 'children may be taken to visit and experience a place that was once used by their Ngai Tahu forebears. *Nohoanga* are thus more than places to fish: they are places of cultural significance' (Otago Daily Times 1998: 7). Members of the *iwi* can reserve camping at the site through the Ngai Tahu centrally operated '0800-nohoanga' and all *iwi* members must fill in an authorisation form to camp in the area. This necessary management technique, which some opponents may see as bureaucratic, is an example of Western administration systems being adopted by an *iwi* authority catering for modern Maori lifestyles. Other regulations include limiting group size (usually a maximum of 30 people per night) and time of year – the area can be used from August to April, traditional food-gathering months.

There is a range of published and Internet material available to visitors concerning Lake Pukaki and the range of values related to *tangata whenua* – for example: ‘Lake Pukaki was named by Rakaihautu, probably for the outlet’s “swollen neck”. It is the sacred resting place of the bow piece of the waka (canoe) “Mahunui” and “Mahuru”’ (Tourism Waitaki 2003).

The information usually focuses on place names and legends rather than on history and contemporary issues. DOC and Meridian Energy have a formal relationship with Ngai Tahu, the latter in particular recognising the *iwi* values for the water from the rivers and lakes that is used for electricity generation. Both organisations supported the inclusion of the two pieces of interpretive material regarding the cultural values of Ngai Tahu in the Lake Pukaki information centre located a kilometre south of the *nohoanga* site. No information is yet available about the many rock-art sites submerged under Lake Pukaki, nor is any mention of the *nohoanga* made at the visitor centre. Lake Pukaki Information Centre was opened in 2000. This centre is staffed during the summer months, primarily for the purpose of providing information on activities and services at other locations in the Mackenzie Country. Approximately 90,000–100,000 visitors are recorded at the site each year attracted by the spectacular views of Aoraki/Mount Cook at the end of the lake. Next to the information centre is a kiosk that houses six interpretive panels comprising text and images, two of which present the Maori cultural values for Lake Pukaki and Aoraki/Mount Cook. One panel relates the legend of Aoraki/Mount Cook. The second panel presents the ‘He Poki mo Aoraki’ lament which explains the importance of Lake Pukaki and the other rivers and lakes of the Mackenzie Country in relation to the melt-waters of the snow and ice from Aoraki. The information on Aoraki was produced by DOC staff in collaboration with Ngai Tahu Rananga o Arowhenua members, and the panels have English and Maori translations. ‘Close liaison with Arowhenua *rananga* and Sir Tipene O’Regan was required to ensure the translation of the legend was correct.’ (Corbett 1996: 1).

No other interpretive material exists for visitors to the area regarding who the Ngai Tahu are and whether the lake has any other value for the *iwi*, despite the *nohoanga* site being so nearby. This lack of information could be regarded as non-confrontational – its absence will not provoke people who may oppose treaty settlements where land areas such as *nohoanga* are set aside for the sole use of *iwi* members. However, the two existing panels lack context as to the contemporary relationship of Maori to the area. Merely relating the legend of Aoraki and the importance of Pukaki raise more questions for the visitors, some of who may investigate the relationship further but a shortage of contextual information could also be frustrating for those visitors who lack understanding of the area.

## Conclusion

In New Zealand there are increasing examples of Maori *iwi* being actively involved in the management of lakes and other natural areas visited for tourism and recreation purposes. Such involvement can assist with the protection of the *mana*, or integrity of the cultural values, located within these areas. For Maori, enhancing the environmental quality of New Zealand lakes is necessary to ensure the conservation of cultural values, particularly with regard to *mahinga kai* and *waahi tapu*. However, there is a lack of rigorous research that monitors tourism or recreational activities and associated impacts, particularly in relation to resources that are the focus of cooperative management of lakes by the Crown and local *iwi*. Such research is required to inform policy that affects the sustainable management of New Zealand lakes.

Whether there is sufficient visitor demand to enable commercial tourism organisations to operate as specialists in interpreting cultural values for lakes is debatable. The interpretation of cultural values for lakes may add value to the visitor experience; however, visitors are predominantly interested in recreational activities such as walking, fishing, boating and generally sightseeing at New Zealand lakes. The relationship of Maori to the surrounding environment is incidental to the primary motivations of many visitors travelling through New Zealand's landscape. Research and reports on tourism in New Zealand suggest there is an increasing demand for Maori cultural experiences (NZTB 1996; Ateljevic & Doorne 2002; McIntosh *et al.* 2000; Van Aalst & Daly 2002; Tourism New Zealand 2003a, 2003b; Carr 2004). Domestic visitors have been identified as major segments for some Maori tourism operations (McIntosh *et al.* 2000; Warren & Taylor 2001). Other studies indicate that international visitors are more interested in Maori culture than domestic visitors, the latter group possibly being too familiar with the culture to be interested in commercial cultural experiences (Ryan 2002; Ryan & Pike 2003; Colmar Brunton 2004). In a 2000 survey of 472 visitors to three natural areas in the southern South Island, 183 respondents (39.7%) were 'very interested' or 'extremely interested' in opportunities to learn about or experience Maori culture (Carr 2004). The respondents regularly associated Maori with Rotorua and parts of Northland, including the Bay of Islands and Cape Reinga, and placed a high level of importance on the protection of Maori cultural and spiritual values at significant sites (Carr 2004). Mythology and legends were the cultural aspects visitors were most interested in ( $n = 134$ ), followed by environmental knowledge or the use of natural resources ( $n = 115$ ). The Colmar Brunton report, *Demand for Maori Culture*, indicated that 53% of travellers interviewed ( $n = 666$ ) were interested in visiting sites of cultural significance to Maori and 38% had actually visited such sites (Colmar Brunton 2004).



It can be concluded that New Zealand lake destinations provide more than just scenic settings or recreational opportunities for visitors. The treaty settlements of the past decade have apparently facilitated opportunities for Maori themselves to participate actively in lakes and water-based recreation. The designation of campsites or *nohoanga* has encouraged the revitalisation of activities such as gathering *mahinga kai*. Existing visitor centres and interpretation around lake areas can incorporate information to educate visitors about the unique cultural values that Maori have for such environments (O'Regan 1990; Keelan 1996; Carr 2004). The provision of *iwi*-owned and operated businesses or the development of interpretation about the diverse cultural values for lakes may enable visitors to have cultural experiences, while strengthening the identity and economic well-being of Maori communities.

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